

USDA Foreign Agricultural Service

GAIN Report

Global Agricultural Information Network

THIS REPORT CONTAINS ASSESSMENTS OF COMMODITY AND TRADE ISSUES MADE BY
USDA STAFF AND NOT NECESSARILY STATEMENTS OF OFFICIAL U.S. GOVERNMENT
POLICY

Voluntary - Public

Date: 11/29/2010

GAIN Report Number: JA0524

Japan

Post: Tokyo ATO

Japan Food Trends November 2010

Report Categories:

Market Development Reports

Approved By:

Steve Shnitzler, Director, ATO Tokyo

Prepared By:

Sumio Thomas Aoki, Senior Marketing Specialist; Sarah Wright, Intern; June McCabe, Intern

Report Highlights:

This month's issue discusses the most recent changes within the food world as we approach the end of November.

Whether it is a replacement for an old habit or a form of fun and entertainment, food's purpose continues to change in the daily lives of the Japanese. The trends in this issue of Japan Food Trends give you some insight into the constant changes happening in the evolving realm of food.

Increased Cigarette Tax's Impact on Food, *Reuters*, 10/11/15

<http://www.reuters.com/article/idUSTOE6AE07E20101115>

On October 1, 2010 the Japanese government imposed the largest ever tax increase on cigarettes. This 40% increase, along with tobacco firms lifting prices higher in order to offset expected sales declines, has made smoking an expensive habit. Just preceding the increase, a multitude of polls and interviews were conducted with smokers about their reactions to the price hike. Many of the smokers actually claimed they were beginning the process of quitting or attempting to find replacements for the habit. As a result of this many local convenience stores, where cigarettes are normally purchased, began the process of coming up with new product lines to maintain the traffic and business of new non-smokers. Stores such as Lawson have introduced new sophisticated dessert items specifically targeting males age 30-45. Stronger marketing of other typically male snack products have also begun as convenience stores look to replace smoking with a snack alternative. The decline in cigarette sales has been significant since October and experts are expecting that the number of cigarettes Japan will fall to 180 billion cigarettes or less in 2011, from an 218 billion cigarettes this year. This means that as more smokers quit, there will be a larger market of non-smokers looking for alternatives. This new development has potential as a marketing especially with snack foods, coffee, or products typically in convenience stores.



From the Editor

Promoting a variety of food products as replacements for may be an effective way to gain a new customer base.

Novelty Coffee Shops, *The Japan Times*, 10/9/17

<http://blog.japantimes.co.jp/japan-pulse/tokyo-cafe-entrepreneurs-bring-more-to-the-table/>



While coffee and coffee shops have been common in Japan for quite some time, cafe culture has only truly developed in the last 10 years. While coffee shops like Tully's, Starbucks, and Excelsior now are just as common in Japan's metropolitan cities as they are in many U.S. cities, novelty coffee shops have begun popping on to the scene. These new coffee shops are taking the concept of novelty to a whole new level. One of the most trendy of these novelty cafes is Wired <> Fit. Wired <> Fit is a combination cafe-fitness center. One side of the complex is an indoor/outdoor fitness center offering running classes and yoga while the other side is a cafe where you can just *think* about running. With a strong emphasis on health, this cafe offers coffee, smoothies, and healthy snack options. Another example of these novelty cafes is one that appeared in Tokyo's trendy Harajuku area. This cafe is called Lavish and is a combination cafe-nail studio. Patrons can decorate their own gel nails, under the supervision of a

professional, while enjoying a variety of coffee treats. Ideas like these are just the beginning as cafe entrepreneurs begin to explore wilder options as success of the established novelty cafe community continues to grow. Within this novelty coffee shop scene there is significant potential for a variety of food and beverage products, exotic and trendy as well as the cafe usuals. This novelty setting can be a great entry point for U.S. products before targeting convenience and other retail outlets.

From the Editor

These novelty coffee shops have opened up new opportunities especially for gourmet snack foods to be placed near the register. One of the ATO Tokyo's contacts, Rie Coffee, has actually been looking for a gourmet snack option or smoothie base for sale at her local coffee shops!

Hooter's Finally Opens in Japan, *Time Out Tokyo*, 10/10/26

<http://www.timeout.jp/en/tokyo/feature/1303>

On October 25th, the first ever Hooter's opened in Tokyo. The Florida-based classical American restaurant brought all of its most famous qualities to Japan, including its menu of American hamburgers, fries, chicken wings. The menu also includes specialty alcoholic drinks like margaritas and piña coladas. Aside from Hooter's signature dishes, most notable are the waitresses, or so called Hooter's girls. So far the restaurant has been popular with the local community, especially local business men; and since its opening, the restaurant has had a consistently long line at the lunch hour rush. With Hooter's girls pulling in the crowds, this restaurant may help to educate and popularize American food products, possibly leading to greater demand and the desire to recreate it at home.



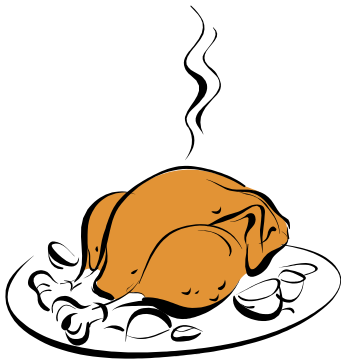
and

From the Editor

If restaurants like Hooter's can popularize appetizers such as hot wings, this can open up a whole new market for frozen hot wings or hot sauce products that do not exist in Japan.

Thanksgiving in Japan, *Metropolis Magazine*, 10/10/11

<http://metropolis.co.jp/dining/international-dining/turkey-day/>



Metropolis Magazine, one of Tokyo's most popular English language magazines has released a list of restaurants serving Thanksgiving meals in the upcoming week. In addition to these dining out options, Costco and several international markets are also beginning to offer frozen turkeys seasonally. While Thanksgiving is not a Japanese holiday, it continues to gain more recognition each year, especially as the food tradition continues to be publicized by the restaurant and retail sectors. The demand created by expatriates living in Tokyo continues to keep Thanksgiving items on store shelves. This continued exposure and demand by the expatriates population and adventurous Japanese food lovers for items such as

pumpkin pie ingredients, frozen turkeys, and pre-packaged stuffing is beginning to peak interest from the general population. But a problem lies in the fact that Japanese households do not usually have a full

oven in which to cook a whole turkey or to bake bread or pastries. In order to circumvent this many such items are generally bought at confectionaries and restaurants. This may mean continued growth in specialty Thanksgiving buffets and course meals provided by restaurants or the creation of home cooking options that are tailored to the Japanese home.

From the Editor

If turkey continues to grow as a seasonal meat choice, then this exposure can open doors for further turkey options, such as lunch meats.

Foodie Films, *Eatrip*, 10/09

<http://eatrip.jp/news/2010/09/tokyo-food-lovers-film-fes.html>

The First Annual Tokyo Food Lovers Film Festival took place at Yebisu Garden in Tokyo this November. Foodies gathered together to watch eight films inspired by food from around the world. The films show the relationship people have with food food has with culture. Many Japanese films made it into the screening including *Eatrip* (2009), in which food director, Nomura Yuri, discusses food's place in life; *Kamome Diner* (2006), the story of a Japanese woman who opens an *onigiri* rice shop in Helsinki; *Tampopo* (1985), a comedy about a truck driver, a widow, and ramen shop; and *Antarctic Chef* (2009), a about food preparation for an expedition party in the Antarctic.

Other international films were also included in the line up: Vietnam's *The Scent of Green Papaya*, France's *Amelie*, England's *Chocolat* and Germany's *Mostly Martha*. Participants got to discuss the food scenes in the films and eat after the screening as well. Some films also had English subtitles for foreign foodies. Events such as this serve as an excellent venue to introduce and promote U.S. food products and cuisine to a targeted food loving audience.



and

ball

story

From the Editor

A U.S. film and food tasting is a great idea for a marketing event! Using two parts of U.S. culture to showcase the benefits of U.S. products is an entertaining and fun way to get your product out there.